

1 CHAIRPERSON BURDETTE: Good morning.

2 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Good morning.

3 CHAIRPERSON BURDETTE: Good morning, Madam Chair
4 James and Commission members for allowing me the opportunity to
5 be here today. I am Vivian Burdette, Tribal Chairperson for the
6 Tonto Apache Tribe in Payson, Arizona.

7 The Tonto Apache Tribe was federally recognized in
8 1972 with 85 acres we began calling home. What matters to our
9 people is the importance of sharing our resource and lending a
10 helping hand to one another. We worshipped in a small one light
11 bulb church. Here we gathered to strengthen our faith. Our
12 needs were simple and we accepted a way of life that existed on
13 reservations throughout Central Arizona. Unemployment was high,
14 education was low and medical facilities were far.

15 The federal neglect of the Indian nation was
16 extremely evident. Funding for badly needed projects on the
17 reservation was scarce and difficult to obtain. Still we
18 remained strong, determined and concerned, held together by our
19 families and our faith.

20 I am here today because I believe in self-sufficiency
21 of the Indian nation. Tribal government gaming has provided a
22 means of self-sufficiency. It has created jobs on the
23 reservation and indirectly created jobs in the community and it
24 has also increased revenue and economic activity throughout the
25 state. Tribal government gaming services serves the same purpose
26 and should be reviewed in the same manner as the state lottery or
27 parimutuel wagering.

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.

(202) 234-4433

WASHINGTON D.C. 20005-3701

www.nealrgross.com

1 Nationally five percent of gaming revenues are
2 derived from Indian gaming, leaving a large revenue portion for
3 Las Vegas, Atlantic City and state lotteries. Throughout the
4 nation only 33 percent of 557 reservations do not use gaming to
5 support their tribal function. Only a small portion of the
6 tribal gaming operations raise enough to generate income and the
7 majority of the Native Americans still live below poverty level.

8 On the Tonto Apache Reservation the Mazatzal Casino
9 currently employs 267 non-tribal members. The current
10 unemployment rate on our reservation is less than five percent
11 compared to 70 percent in 1992. Due to the increase of
12 employment opportunities, the overall crime rate for Payson has
13 dropped three percent. The Mazatzal Casino utilizes local
14 business thus helping sustain themselves during the slow winter
15 months. Medical insurance has been provided for 161 non-tribal
16 families and all Tonto Apache tribal members which is 108.

17 The elderly are provided with daily meals. There is
18 a youth program, day care, playground, education fund and a
19 gymnasium for our reservation. We have a tribal social worker, a
20 tribal substance abuse counselor and a counselor employed by the
21 casino on the premises.

22 There are just a few of the economic goals which the
23 Tonto Apache Tribe has accomplished from the positive impact of
24 Indian gaming to solidify an economic future and insure the
25 substance and operate our tribal government with less federal
26 assistance. Our dream of self-sufficient is becoming a reality
27 and we are thankful for the progress we have made. We look

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.

(202) 234-4433

WASHINGTON D.C. 20005-3701

www.nealrgross.com

1 forward to the future with which Indian gaming can provide for
2 us.

3 As always there are those who look for and dwell on
4 the downside of any situation. Admittedly there can be problems
5 associated with this form of industry. Gaming addiction is
6 obviously at issue. However, addiction comes in many forms. Any
7 form of addiction is a concern in any community. Unfortunately
8 we cannot remove all the addictive elements present in our daily
9 lives. Eliminating Indian gaming in Arizona would not remove the
10 addiction of gambling.

11 We do feel that the resources are available for
12 sufficient dealing with the issue that can arise. Counseling is
13 available for tribal members and the number for Gambling
14 Anonymous is posted throughout the casino. Unfortunately the
15 local charity of Gambling Anonymous has dissolved due to lack of
16 participants. Persons admitting a problem with gambling can be
17 barred from the establishment upon request and are referred to an
18 association which assists them with their problems. We urge
19 people to gamble responsibly.

20 A close watch is kept on the tribal community based
21 on information from the tribal social service department. There
22 has been no significant increase in alcohol related incidents on
23 the reservation as a result of gaming. Substance abuse is
24 limited to a few persons and is not a result of gaming. The
25 crime rate and juvenile delinquency rate is at its lowest.

26 Indian gaming has made a positive impact on our
27 lives. In this community and in this state we have been given a
28 definite sense of accomplishment and pride. We have something to

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.

(202) 234-4433

WASHINGTON D.C. 20005-3701

www.nealrgross.com

1 strive for and to grow with to improve and most of all something
2 to pass onto our youth. We will be passing on a new improved way
3 of life consistent of higher standard, higher education and self-
4 sufficiency.

5 Again, thank you for giving me the opportunity to
6 express the views of the Tonto Apache Tribe on this issue.
7 Enclosed for your review are some fact sheets containing
8 important additional information. If you have any questions I,
9 at this time, will answer them.

10 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.

(202) 234-4433

WASHINGTON D.C. 20005-3701

www.nealrgross.com